

4D Optics

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4D Optics

developing innovative technology for high-resolution imaging

4D Optics is investigating the use of new technology for obtaining high-resolution images of the eye. The company, based at the University of Essex’s Business Incubation Centre in Southend, is developing an automated screening instrument that will overcome the need for expensive equipment in high street opticians.

The application of this research will be a low-cost, easy-to-use instrument that will enable a far higher resolution image of a patient’s retina to be captured. High-resolution imaging will enable the detection of much smaller changes in the eye retina than was possible until now. Initially it will be used to improve early detection of Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), the major cause of blindness in the over 50s.

“We set up 4D Optics in 2007,” says founder and Chief Technical Officer, Peter West. “Initially, we were based in East London, but we recognised the potential benefits of the facilities and opportunities available in Essex.”

Working with INVEST Essex, the company found premises at the Business Incubation Centre that were more suitable for a growing company.



The Centre provides flexible accommodation with offices and optical laboratories for the company’s three scientists and room for expansion.

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For Peter West, Southend’s location and excellent transport links are proving useful.

“The fast train links to London mean we can visit the London eye hospitals and universities easily when we need to.”

Funding has also played an important role in accelerating 4D Optics’ growth. “We secured a £75K Research and Development Grant from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to conduct a feasibility study,” says Peter West.

“That kind of basic, high-risk research would have been very difficult to fund elsewhere.”

“The facilities and the support available in Essex have made it possible to get up and running quickly, and has helped reduce some of the risk. Looking to the future, we know that, with other scientific instrument companies located in the area, there is already a good pool of the skilled people we will need.”



INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

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